

Healing Children through "Spatial Experience" Architecture

By
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The research discusses architecture that produces spatial experience with which children are able to interact, giving them a great sense of positive energy that translates into actual healing. This type of architecture is few in number but can create a transition towards sustainable childhood.

Spatial experience was evident in the architectural practice of the ancient world. Back then architects considered what moods should they give to spaces that best suit their functions. They believed good practice is the one that has a pleasing vibe with its users, and for this to happen they experimented with proportions, light, texture, solid and void, form, structure, along with other aspects of space-making.

In our contemporary world this trail of thinking is pushed aside to give more space for modern technology and standard production. Spatial experience, more often than not, is replaced by forms that do not connect with the user's psychology. Program of the building is reduced to mere functions that are technically performed without considering the mood of the space. Mechanical organization of spaces led to spiritless design that does not touch the soul of humans.

Yet there is a growing interest among architects today who believe in such ideas and are willing to exert an effort in providing the right moods for their buildings with a sustainable vibe. The paper will discuss this point by taking four examples of architecture specialized in healing children.

Before doing so I will trace the theoretical background behind spatial experience in architecture by focusing on 4 moments in history that will have inspired generations to come. The first moment is Vitruvius' insights on the Greek temple and house, the second is the 18th century enlightenment writings of Boffrand and Blondel, the third is the theory of Quatremère de Quincy, the staunch teacher of the 19th century Beaux-Arts school and the forth is the quintessential 1962 book "Experiencing Architecture" by Steen Rasmussen.

By presenting such genre of the ancients, spatial experience producers of today will have followed the same approach. The research will present theoretical design of four centers for healing children. The first is a center that treats children experiencing trauma due to sexual abuse, physical violence and death incident, the second treats children with physical disabilities especially movement disorder due to neurological conditions, the third deals with children suffering from speech disorder or language delay and the forth handles active and passive children who experience autism.

The four projects are designed by young architects who imagined a better world for children. They placed their projects in the midst of a large public garden with the intention to introduce landscape as an added healing power for children. The research will go into details of every project capturing the mood of therapeutic spaces indoor and outdoor with the intention to show the value of this trail of thinking in producing a very special architecture for children.